

Fort Eustis (US Army)

EPA Region 3 EPA ID# VA6210020321 **Last Update:** June 2002
Virginia
Newport News **3rd Congressional District** **Other Names:** None

Current Site Status

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is overseeing the cleanup of Ft. Eustis which is presently a National Priorities List Site of most hazardous sites in the country. Several cleanup measures have been taken there, including an Interim Removal Action (removal of contaminants that pose an immediate threat) that was completed at the Brown's Lake location, an Interim Removal Action at Bailey Creek that was completed during the summer of 2000, and additional evaluations at Milstead Island Creek, the Oil/Sludge Holding Pond and the Fire Training Area. Each of these sites are part of the ongoing five-site Remedial Investigation activities at Fort Eustis. In addition a Record of Decision (ROD) has been signed for the DOL Storage Yard site. The ROD will address pesticide and polyaromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) contamination at the site.

Site Description

The Fort Eustis site occupies approximately 8,300 acres in southeastern Virginia, within the city of Newport News. Fort Eustis is

owned and operated by the U.S. Department of the Army and is located on the western side of a low-lying peninsula formed by the York River and the James River estuaries. This peninsula is approximately 30 miles upstream of the confluence of the James River and the Chesapeake Bay. The James River is a major commercial fishing and recreational resource; it is the third largest tidal tributary of the Chesapeake Bay and the most productive estuary in Virginia. The site began operations in 1918 as a training center known as Camp Abraham Eustis. In 1946, Fort Eustis became the Transportation Corps Training Center, providing operations training in rail, marine, amphibious, and other modes of transportation. In 1988, the U.S. Army Toxic and Hazardous Materials Agency identified 34 potential waste sources at Fort Eustis. The sources include unlined landfills, pesticide storage areas, firefighting training areas, maintenance shops, and range and impact areas resulting from anti-aircraft training activities. A landfill that received hazardous wastes is located at the headwaters of Bailey's Creek, a 160-acre wetland area adjacent to the site. Approximately 17,500 military personnel, their dependents, and civilians live or work at the installation.

Site Responsibility

Cleanup of this site is the responsibility of the Federal government.


NPL Listing History

This site was prosed to the National Priorities List of the most serious uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites requiring long-term remedial action January 18, 1994. The site was formally added to the list on December 16, 1994, making it eligible for federal cleanup funds.

Threats and Contaminants

Sampling conducted in 1987 and 1990 indicated contamination of sediments in Bailey Creek. Contaminants include polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), lead and pesticides such as chlordane, DDD, DDE, and DDT. Fish collected from Bailey Creek contained PCBs. A 1990 survey of Brown's Lake revealed that fish had lesions, ectoparasites, and skeletal deformities. A 1990 survey indicated that surface water in the lake was contaminated with PCBs, pesticides, and polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). A 1993 survey indicated that the contamination was concentrated within the sediment of Brown's Lake. Sediment

samples revealed PCB and heavy metal contamination in the lake and in a tributary to the lake below the Locomotive Area. Sampling in Milstead Island Creek, the Fire Training Area and the DOL Storage Yard found sediments contaminated with PAHs and pesticides, along with volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds.

Contaminant descriptions and associated risk factors are available on the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry, an arm of the CDC, web site at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hazdat.html> 

Cleanup Progress

The revised Final RI Report and a Feasibility Study (FS) for the DOL Storage Yard site have been reviewed by the regulators. A Record of Decision (ROD) was issued in FY 01 to address pesticide and PAH contaminated soil and sediment directly under and surrounding the Yard, and an adjacent wetland and drainage swale area. Remedial Action is scheduled to begin during the fall of 2002.

EPA reviewed the Remedial Investigation report for five sites at Fort Eustis. The five sites include Bailey Creek, Brown's Lake, Milstead Island Creek ditch canal, the Fire Training Area and the Oil/Sludge Holding Pond. Remedial actions and additional investigations, based on the outcome of the October 1998 meeting have been initiated at several of these sites.

Sampling conducted in 1987 and 1990 indicated contamination of sediments in Bailey Creek. Contaminants include polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), lead, and pesticides. PCBs were found in fish collected from Bailey Creek. A sediment and surface water sampling event was conducted at Bailey Creek in May 1996. Sampling results were presented at the October 1996 Technical Review Committee meeting. Sampling results revealed elevated levels of lead and PCB in the creek. Sampling conducted at Bailey Creek during the summer of 1999 indicated PCB concentrations exceeding 2,200 parts per million (ppm) in sediment samples. An Interim Removal Action addressing contamination at Bailey Creek has been completed at the site to address PCB contamination. Long Term Monitoring and an FS are planned at the site. In addition, a phased approach Removal Action to address lead contamination at the Former Skeet Range has

been initiated.

A 1990 survey of Brown's Lake revealed that fish had lesions, ectoparasites, and skeletal deformities. Surface water and sediment in the lake is contaminated with PCBs, pesticides, and polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). Sampling conducted in 1993 indicated lower levels of PCBs, pesticides and PAH contamination. Sediment samples revealed PCB and heavy metal contamination in the lake and in a tributary to the lake below the Locomotive Area. An Interim Removal Action was initiated in the winter/spring of 1999 to address the contamination at Brown's Lake. The Removal Action was completed in the summer of 1999. Long-term monitoring is currently being conducted at the site, and an FS will be incorporated.

Sampling in Milstead Island Creek found sediments contaminated with PAHs and pesticides. Wetland areas surround the site and are used for recreational and fishing purposes. Groundwater monitoring wells at the landfills are sampled semi-annually (April - October). Additional sampling and a Feasibility Study will be conducted at the site during 2002.

A Feasibility Study (FS) is currently being conducted at the Fire Training Area and includes additional sediment sampling in wetland areas surrounding the Fire Training Area, and deep well groundwater sampling. A Treatability Study is being discussed to identify the extent of a plume at the site.

An oil recovery system was installed at the Helicopter maintenance area in December 1995. This system is still in operation and is operating under the auspices of an approved corrective action plan that was submitted to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

Fort Eustis initiated a field sampling program at Eustis Lake in October 1996 and it was completed in December 1996. The Army has submitted to EPA a draft Remedial Investigation for Eustis Lake and EPA has responded to the Draft RI. Eustis Lake has a catch and release fishing restriction currently imposed at the site. Results from the Eustis Lake site RI indicated unacceptable levels of PCBs in fish tissue samples, as well as PCB's, pesticides and metals found in sediment. A Feasibility Study to address the remediation alternatives

for Eustis Lake will be initiated during 2002.

A ROD is also planned for the Oil/Sludge Holding Pond during FY 02. This ROD will address the excavation and disposal of contaminated soil and sludge. An FS and Proposed Plan have been reviewed and Regulator concurrence was provided to Fort Eustis.

A Federal Facilities Agreement (FFA) between EPA and the Department of the Army is currently in the renegotiating stage. An FFA is a required document that outlines cleanup goals, schedules and imposes stipulated penalties for bypassing the negotiated schedules.

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The detailed Administrative Record can be examined at the following locations:

Groninger Library

Ft. Eustis Bldg. 1313

Ft. Eustis, VA 23604

Christopher Newport University Library

50 Shoe Lane

Newport News, VA 23606

Grissom Public Library

366 Deshazor Dr.

Newport News, VA 23602